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Chair: Mr. Mohammed (Vice-Chair) ..... (Guyana)

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In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Mohammed (Guyana), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 70: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (*continued*)

(a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (*continued*) (A/70/18 and A/70/321)

(b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (*continued*) (A/70/339, A/70/367, A/70/309 and A/70/335)

Agenda item 71: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*) (A/70/314 and A/70/330)

1. **Mr. Mamabolo** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that a resolute and renewed political will, adequate funding and sustained international cooperation were indispensable for addressing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and the outcomes of the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and of the 2009 Durban Review Conference formed the fundamental international framework for the elimination of racism and related intolerance. Regrettably, subtle, residual and resurgent forms of racism made it imperative for the United Nations human rights system to remain seized of the matter.

2. The programme of activities associated with the International Decade for People of African Descent continued to be relevant, and the Group welcomed recent efforts to elaborate complementary standards. Slavery had evolved in ways that continued to make Africans, people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent victims of oppression and racism. The key drivers of globalization and owners of global wealth continued to exploit the human resources of developing countries and plunder their natural resources with impunity through their multinational companies and extractive mining industries. In response, developing countries were vigorously pursuing new norms in international human rights law aimed at ensuring the accountability of such entities and combating their violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remained the only document that prescribed measures and established remedies for the victims of all the scourges of racism. The Group of 77 and China called on all Member States that were responsible for historic injustices to honour the memory of the historical victims of racism through atonement and the provision of remedies.

4. It was unacceptable for racism to be meted out by State authorities to people of African descent in the diaspora and in countries where they lived as citizens. Growing incitement to hatred, intolerance and lack of respect for diversity were a grave concern and had led to increases in extremism, violence and terrorism. The Group rejected racial profiling and negative stereotyping based on religion or belief and reiterated the call on Member States, the United Nations system and the international community to oppose religious intolerance and to enhance dialogue, which was critical for promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and respect of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. The Group also reiterated its call for countries to eliminate discrimination against migrants, who were often victims of exploitation and xenophobia.

5. The persistence of racism and racial discrimination was related to past atrocities. The legacy of slavery in particular was at the heart of the profound inequality that continued to affect people of African descent. The fight against racism should recognize the social and economic dimensions of the injustices of the past and seek to redress them appropriately. That fight must be based on solidarity and waged through cooperation, partnership and inclusion. At the national level, that meant ensuring the equal participation of all in the formation of just, equitable, democratic and inclusive societies. Renewed political will was needed in addition to stronger institutions and laws. Education played a critical role in promoting understanding and creating awareness at all levels of society, particularly among young people and at a time when there were new ways of disseminating racist messages.

6. The Group commended the work of the Human Rights Council to eradicate all the scourges of racism and encouraged it to complete the elaboration of complementary standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial

Discrimination, continuing the excellent trajectory of the United Nations human rights bodies in that field.

7. **Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that racism must be addressed with greater urgency and effectiveness. Sustainable development would be achieved only where it was achieved for all people.

8. The member States of CELAC had multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual populations and stood to benefit from the richness of that diversity in their pursuit of development. The Community was committed to taking action under the 2015-2024 International Decade for People of African Descent, which would complement those related to the 2014-2023 International Decade for Latin American and Caribbean People of African Descent and other regional initiatives, to ensure the full realization of their economic, social and cultural rights, contribute to the fight against discrimination, racism and intolerance, repair the damage caused by slavery and address the wide-ranging effects of racism on people of African descent today. CELAC welcomed the unveiling of the "Ark of Return" monument at United Nations Headquarters in 2015 as a permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The most meaningful way to honour the victims of slavery now was to deal with the realities faced by their descendants.

9. Slavery had had an indelible impact on Latin America and the Caribbean, enriching the region's societies with cultural and ethnic diversity on the one hand, but leaving ingrained social stratification and discrimination, on the other. The peoples of the region had suffered an incalculable wrong, and much more needed to be done to balance the scales of justice. All must work together to ensure that, in each dimension of sustainable development, those who had been exploited and harmed would be allowed their just part in global progress. The region was determined to create societies where all people were equal and where opportunities, prospects and achievements were not determined by skin colour or ethnic background. CELAC would continue to support actions and forums seeking to address the legacies of slavery, as well as contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking.

10. **Mr. Thomas** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that promising results had been achieved in the first year of the International Decade for People of African Descent in the promotion of respect for the heritage and culture of people of African descent and their contribution to society. CARICOM was deeply concerned, however, about continued discrimination in the administration of justice, including racial profiling, access to economic, social and cultural rights and effective participation. The Community hoped that the collection of data on hate crimes and victims' access to justice and the detection of discrimination in the administration of justice would help address the problem.

11. CARICOM encouraged all relevant stakeholders to contribute generously to the special fund established by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for the Decade, as well as to related projects, and hoped that the implementation of the associated programme of activities and the mechanisms put in place by the Human Rights Council would be expedited.

12. People of African descent continued to face rampant and disproportionate discrimination, in many cases, due to the structural legacies of slavery and colonialism. CARICOM members had heard recent calls to move on from the pains of the past, but that required healing and reconciliation, which could only come through acknowledgement of the horrendous past, the assumption of responsibility and the provision of reparation. The Member States concerned must seek a conciliatory and collaborative approach towards righting the wrongs of the past. The CARICOM Heads of Government had therefore, in March 2014, set up the Caribbean Reparatory Justice Programme to elaborate mechanisms for addressing the legacies of slavery and native genocide. The Programme sought action in the areas of health, education and technology transfer, as well as debt cancellation, and, as a first step, a full formal apology. Beyond notions of handouts and mendicancy, there was a case to be answered; the only question was when, where and how.

13. Member States should seek or provide appropriate technical and financial assistance at the regional and international levels for the large-scale collection of ethnicity-disaggregated data on economic, social, cultural, civil and political indicators as an essential means of tackling discrimination and inequality, while protecting the personal privacy of individuals with strong data protection and confidentiality laws.

14. CARICOM also welcomed the unveiling of the permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade "Ark of Return", an initiative it had led in partnership with African States, not only as a reminder of the horrendous past and an honour to those who had suffered, but also as a symbol for future generations. Racism and racial discrimination continued to hinder the enjoyment of human rights and the achievement of development for millions of people all over the world. Minorities in particular continued to be denied equal and just treatment, often on the basis of race or ethnicity. States must fulfil their obligations and commitments under the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Discrimination, oppression, exclusion, repression and notions of racial superiority served only to divide and generate distrust, disharmony and strife, fuelling violence, sectarianism and social unrest. All Member States must intensify their efforts to eliminate racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia as a means of safeguarding the human rights of all citizens and achieving development for all.

15. **Mr. Ntwaagae** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that, notwithstanding stern opposition, political posturing and scepticism, major achievements had been registered in the protection of the dignity of the victims of slavery and in addressing racism, including the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, the unveiling of the "Ark of Remembrance" monument, the proper realignment of the Anti-Discrimination Unit in OHCHR as the Anti-Racial Discrimination Section, the refocusing of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the contemporary scourges and manifestations of racism, and the work being done by the Human Rights Council in that regard.

16. It was time to embrace diversity and tolerance. There should be a significant paradigm shift from rhetoric to reality about the dangers that racism posed. Continuing debilitating global poverty had given rise to new forms of intolerance, some of which assumed violent and extremist forms. SADC remained steadfast in its call for additional protocols to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and looked forward to the General Assembly giving the chairperson of the corresponding committee the required mandate at the current session. SADC also looked forward to the Assembly adopting a quality resolution addressing, inter alia, the establishment of a permanent forum on people of African descent in the diaspora, based in part on the outcome of regional consultations in North America and Europe with the relevant civil society organisations and representatives of the victims and people of African descent in the diaspora; and the formal adoption, albeit ex-post-facto, of the draft programme of action for the International Decade for People of African Descent.

17. **Mr. de Bustamante** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition Georgia and Ukraine, said that a fundamental principle of the European Union was that all human beings were born free and equal in dignity and in rights, and all members of society, irrespective of their gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity, must be treated equally.

18. The European Union had developed a solid legal framework to address racial discrimination, racism and xenophobia. Discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin or religion was prohibited since 2000, and Member States were obliged to penalize public incitement to violence or hatred against a group or a member of a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin since 2008. Victims of bias-motivated crime were entitled to access to justice, compensation and reparation and to receive appropriate information, support and protection. In addition, concrete tools had been developed for the effective prevention of, and fight against, racism and xenophobia, and for the promotion of a more tolerant, diverse and inclusive society. The first European Union Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights, held in October 2015, had brought together a wide range of actors to discuss how to prevent and combat anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred, and the European Union was determined to implement the ensuing recommended actions.

19. Combating racism, xenophobia and related intolerance was also a priority in the European Union's external action policy. Under its 2015-2019 Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the European Union would promote the exchange of best practices

with partner countries on combating racism and related intolerance, and would fund the work of non-State actors, including human rights defenders engaged in pertinent activities across the globe. The European Union also supported the work of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, whose reports contributed to efforts to address highly relevant issues.

20. Given the clear evidence that discrimination and intolerance severely hampered the healthy development of nations, his delegation was pleased that the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development placed emphasis on fighting discrimination and reducing inequality. He reiterated calls for the universal ratification of the International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which was also a core objective of the Durban Declaration and the Decade for People of African Descent and their respective programmes of action and activities. A successful Decade would only be achieved with true ownership and engagement by all States and its effective implementation in a collaborative manner at all levels. Respecting the carefully negotiated resolution which had led to the consensual adoption of the Decade's Programme of Activities was of the utmost importance in that regard.

21. **Mr. Abdrakhmanov** (Kazakhstan) said that Kazakhstan was one of the 57 States that had signed the optional declaration recognizing the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to consider complaints from individuals or groups. The Kazakh Constitution expressly prohibited discrimination in any form. The incitement to social, national, ethnic, racial, class or religious discord were classified as extremist crimes in the Criminal Code. All ethnic groups of Kazakhstan were involved in nation building and enjoyed the same status, not as national minorities, but as citizens with full civil and political rights. There were currently some 900 ethnic and cultural associations in Kazakhstan, and their rights and interests were protected by the People's Assembly through special mechanisms.

22. Tolerance and harmony, the cornerstones of Kazakh society, were achieved with the support of the media, which enjoyed total freedom: there were 32 national newspapers covering 13 languages. Mutual respect for ethnic and linguistic heritage was promoted by the Ministry of Culture and Sports as part of the doctrine on national unity, and regional law enforcement officers received special training to increase their awareness of the Government's inter-ethnic policy. Major religious communities were represented at all levels of government, and measures were taken to protect the rights of believers, irrespective of their religious affiliation, as well as the rights of foreigners. The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions had been hosted in Astana as a platform for a dialogue among spiritual leaders since 2003.

23. Approximately 130 ethnic groups from 18 major world religions coexisted peacefully in Kazakhstan, and the Kazakhstan model of interethnic tolerance had been highly commended by both regional organizations and the United Nations. Since investment in development was key for reducing discontent and conflict between ethnic groups and greatly promoted social peace and stability, the President of Kazakhstan had proposed, at the 70th session of the General Assembly, that States should allocate one per cent of their annual defence budgets to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Fund.

24. Kazakhstan would remain a multi-confessional State, embodying equal rights and opportunities, including freedom of conscience and religion, and stood ready to work with the international community to combat racism and related intolerance throughout the world.

25. **Ms. Pérez Gómez** (Colombia) said that the Constitution of Colombia recognized the multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural nature of Colombian society and upheld the principle of not only formal, but also material, equality, as well as affirmative action for groups that were discriminated against. There were 89 different indigenous peoples in Colombia, and both indigenous languages and Spanish were recognized as official languages.

26. The country's Anti-Discrimination Law had been enacted in 2011, together with a number of measures, such as the criminalization of discriminatory acts and prison terms for perpetrators. To mark the start of the International Decade for People of African Descent, the Government had launched a national anti-racism campaign, established a special regime for the Raizal communities in the San Andrés islands and arranged property-tax compensation in the territories held

collectively by Afro-descendent communities. The Office of the Ombudsman also ensured that Afro-Colombians affected by the internal armed conflict received due reparation.

27. The Colombian Government was committed to providing access to infrastructure services, health and education, to all persons, regardless of their background, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, both to reduce inequality and poverty and as the foundation for building peace in the country.

28. **Ms. Changtrakul** (Thailand) said that Thailand embraced diversity of race, culture and religion. There were five main linguistic families and a total of 62 ethnic groups in Thailand, and the Government continued its efforts to guarantee the basic human rights of all persons regardless of their race. To ensure proper legal status for all, migrant workers on fishing vessels in Thailand were now registered and enjoyed equal labour protections, and all children born in the country could be registered at birth. Undocumented migrant workers also benefited from universal health care since 2013.

29. The Ministry of Culture was working to protect the intangible cultural heritages of all communities. A number of primary schools received special assistance to provide bilingual teaching in border and marginalized areas where students came from ethnic groups that spoke other languages than Thai. Thailand has always attached significance to building harmonious interfaith relations and would host an international symposium on interfaith dialogue in Bangkok in early 2016. The symposium was being co-organized with the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, a subsidiary body of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, with a view to enhancing dialogue across civilizations and religions.

30. **Mr. Yesod** (Israel) said that the Jewish people had known racism in the form of anti-Semitism for time immemorial. According to the 2014 study by the Anti-Defamation League, *ADL Global 100*, 1 billion adults around the world harboured anti-Semitic attitudes towards Jews, and new forms had emerged showing how racism was not only a dangerous, but an easily disguisable, weapon. The campaign of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement, for example, bullied anyone who showed support for, or identified with, Israel and targeted Jews solely on the basis of their religion. The worldwide web was sadly used as a place for racist incitement, which could also have deadly consequences. Videos teaching "how to kill a Jew" circulated the Internet at unimaginable speed, and prejudicial ideas and hatred were shared with a click of a button. The web could also be a tool for social action and for challenging racist narratives, however; and creative ways to use the Internet to foster respect for diversity and tolerance had to be found.

31. The United Nations must do more. His delegation called for the appointment of a special rapporteur on anti-Semitism, and for the Department of Public Information to fulfil its commitment to arrange a follow-up conference to the "Unlearning intolerance" seminar series. Governments, for their part, must make it a national priority to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. The Israeli Ministry of Education had developed programmes to reduce prejudice and violence among students and increase understanding of the importance of coexistence in Israeli society. Meanwhile civil society groups were pursuing social inclusion initiatives and fighting discrimination at ground level. The strong involvement of the private sector and a true partnership with civil society were crucial in such work.

32. **Ms. Brooke** (United States of America) said that the United States had made progress in combating racism, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. It was well aware, however, that much needed to be done within its own borders as well as around the globe. Recent efforts to prevent discrimination against migrants and refugees included public awareness initiatives by the inter-agency Task Force on New Americans and a strategic federal action plan on immigration and the integration of refugees. In addition, 120 mayors had joined the Coalition of Cities against Racism launched by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO), and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights had visited several United States cities in September 2015 to discuss concerns about the use of excessive force by police. The United States was also working and sharing experiences with South American countries, with a view to addressing racism, discrimination and social exclusion by implementing action plans to promote racial and ethnic equality. The well-being of the peoples of the world depended on the efforts of all Member States to address discrimination within their borders and their collective efforts within the United Nations.

33. **Mr. Lim** Teck Hong (Singapore) said that Singapore's population was about 75 percent Chinese, 13 per cent Malays, 9 percent Indians and 3 per cent composed of other races, and the Pew Research Centre had described Singapore as the most religiously diverse country in the world in 2014. To ensure that no single racial or religious group was discriminated against, the Constitution reaffirmed equality before the law regardless of race, language or religion, and the Presidential Council for Minority Rights scrutinized all bills before Parliament to ensure that they did not, in effect, discriminate against any particular race or religion.

34. To promote interracial and interreligious understanding, the Government had created common touch points for racial and religious groups to interact. The Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles , for example, which brought together leaders of different religious, ethnic and community groups in each local constituency for dialogue and trust building, allowed racial and religious tensions to be diffused quickly if they arose. The Government also worked closely with community and religious leaders to address the spread of radical views and inflammatory remarks through the media. Information pamphlets had been published to educate the public on terrorism, and videos explaining why violent extremism was against religious teachings had been produced to reach out to Internet-savvy youths who were most at risk of being radicalised via social media.

35. Singapore's strong stance against racial and religious discrimination and its active management of public spaces to promote social harmony had reaped dividends. In a recent study, 9 out of 10 Singaporeans were comfortable with having someone of another race as a neighbour, colleague or employee, and 8 out of 10 were comfortable with having a close friend from another race or religion. In the past year, the world had witnessed how racial and religious tensions could lead to violent attacks like that on the offices of the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical magazine in France and the Charleston church shooting in the United States of America. Both incidents were stark reminders of the need to manage racial and religious fault-lines to preserve social harmony and stability.

36. Singapore's recent signing of the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reflected its continued commitment to eliminating racial and religious discrimination and to building a harmonious and inclusive society.

37. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that Brazil had the largest black population outside Africa. Over 100 million Brazilians were of African descent. Since 2005, the Government had made progress in redressing social and racial inequalities: public policies had lifted over 16 million people out of extreme poverty, and three quarters of the new middle class were of African descent. In only one decade, the percentage of Afro-Brazilians in the middle class had grown from 38 per cent to 51 per cent. Racial inequality and manifestations of racism nevertheless persisted.

38. Poverty, social exclusion and economic disparities were closely associated with racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, and in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it was crucial to combat them. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination remained key references in that struggle. Brazil also attached great importance to the establishment of the Forum for People of African Descent, which should be conceived as a broad consultation mechanism open to all persons of African descent. For its part, Brazil would host the first of five regional meetings on the International Decade for People of African Descent, as well as a regional conference to promote the human rights of those who faced racial discrimination. Brazil had also organized a debate on self-representation as a strategy to fight racism, at the United Nations in September that year, which had revealed how self-representation could be used to realize political and cultural potential.

39. Democracy could not thrive in racist societies, as reflected in the adoption by consensus of the resolution on the subject sponsored by the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) in the Human Rights Council. The diffusion of ideas based on racial superiority and hatred and incitement to racial discrimination and xenophobia must be condemned. States must be especially watchful in periods of economic downturn and austerity when stigmatization and targeting of vulnerable groups tended to increase. Particular attention should also be paid to the victims of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance afflicted all countries and regions and must

be addressed as a priority by the international community as a whole.

40. **Ms. Moreno Guerra** (Cuba) said that the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remained pending in the fight for equality. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance continued unabated in many parts of the world, while age-old civilizations and religions were demonized by powerbrokers and their media outlets. All forms of discrimination and intolerance must be eliminated, and all doctrines based on racial or cultural superiority must be vigorously rejected. Cuba would participate actively in the activities associated with the International Decade for People of African Descent. The consequences of the transatlantic slave trade were visible in Cuba, and Cuban culture had been enriched by its African heritage.

41. With regard to self-determination, his delegation reiterated its support for the Working Group on the use of mercenaries and its pursuit of international norms to govern the activities of private security and military enterprises and called on all Member States to do the same. Cuba would be presenting a draft resolution on the subject again that year. Self-determination and respect for the sovereignty of States were enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, yet wars of aggression, interference in the internal affairs of States, overthrows of sovereign Governments, so-called "soft coups" and the re-colonization of territories continued in new forms and guises, including by alleging the perpetration of human rights violations to justify such actions.

42. As long as foreign occupation and domination persisted, it made no sense to speak of respect for human rights. The right to free determination was a prerequisite for all other rights. A fair and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East required the effective realization of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to build their own State. Some countries, however, contrary to international law took unilateral and illegal action against others. Cuba itself had endured over fifty years of grave violations of its right to self-determination. Cuba reaffirmed that right, as well as its independence and its sovereignty.

43. **Mr. Rabi** (Morocco) said that the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights were the bedrock of the international system. His delegation noted with regret that 8 million Kabyle were still denied their fundamental right to self-determination, to which they had aspired for over 9,000 years. Their collective punishment through an economic blockade and the harassment and violent persecution of their leaders was unacceptable. Peaceful demonstrations had been broken up and university students had been subjected to violence for demanding their cultural and linguistic rights. The Kabyle were the only indigenous people in Africa persecuted that way. For too long they had remained invisible and unheard. The international community must not be complicit in silencing their voices; instead it should help the Kabyle in their legitimate struggle for self-determination and promote and protect their rights under international law, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

44. **Ms. Mansouri** (Algeria) said that despite the progress made in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, those phenomena persisted and continued to spread. The current situation of migrants was of serious concern in that regard, and her delegation urged Member States to provide better protection for migrants against all forms of violence or discrimination based on nationality or religious belief. Policies and programmes that boosted capacity to integrate migrants in destination societies and fostered peaceful intercommunity relations must be put in place.

45. Intercultural dialogue and respect for diversity were essential for combating racial discrimination and related intolerance. Recent efforts on the elaboration of complementary standards to strengthen and update international instruments on the subject were encouraging and would contribute to the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Algeria looked forward to the International Decade for People of African Descent and urged all donors to contribute generously to the associated activities. In Algeria, the elimination of racism and racial discrimination was firmly established in the Constitution, which granted equal treatment and rights to Algerian citizens and foreigners and guaranteed freedom of belief and religion. Furthermore, the direct or indirect dissemination of racist messages, intolerance and incitement to violence was prohibited by law.

46. The right to self-determination was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and other instruments, and isolated attempts to narrow its interpretation would never justify the curtailment of that right for peoples under foreign occupation. The violation of the right to self-determination was a violation of all human rights and a form of discrimination. The international community should further the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020) to ensure the full realization of the right of all peoples under foreign occupation to self-determination. It was deeply regrettable that self-determination was still inaccessible to the people in the remaining non-self-governing territories, such as the Saharawi people and the Palestinian people, whose fate remained in the hands of the international community.

47. **Mr. Lukiyantsev** (Russian Federation) said that Member States, international bodies and civil society organizations were adopting radically different approaches to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the resulting lack of coherence was hindering efforts to combat those phenomena. It was crucial to enhance coordination between all relevant stakeholders to that end. In particular, stakeholders must understand that upholding the right of individuals and entities to freely express their opinions did not mean that States should uphold their right to disseminate racist or extremist views. Indeed, individuals and entities disseminating such views must be prosecuted, in accordance with article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and all States that had made a reservation to that article were strongly urged to withdraw it. States could not successfully combat racism while they continued to tolerate the dissemination of racist propaganda, condoned demonstrations that honoured former members of the Waffen SS or attempted to falsify history by whitewashing the evil that had ultimately led to the foundation of the United Nations. As the world commemorated the seventieth anniversary of the defeat of Nazism and the convening of the first Nuremburg trials, it was crucial to ensure the permanency of the Nuremberg principles and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The mechanisms and bodies established pursuant to the adoption of the Convention, including the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, must be strengthened, and all attempts to limit the jurisdiction of that Committee, including in the settlement of disputes among States parties, must be resisted.

48. The situation of so-called "non-citizens" and the ongoing discrimination faced by national minorities in Latvia and Estonia were matters of grave concern; it was unacceptable that hundreds of thousands of people were denied their fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Governments of those two States continued to make exaggerated and cynical claims regarding the progress they were making in terms of reducing the number of non-citizens and, at current rates of naturalization, the problem of non-citizenship was unlikely to be resolved for decades. To achieve an international order that allowed all peoples to decide their political future, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles enshrined in international law, the international community must uphold the rights of all peoples of the world on an equitable basis, and must reject double standards and efforts by States or groups of States to advance their narrow, short-term interests.

49. **Mr. Mousa** (Egypt) said that the world was witnessing a resurgence in xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination, which undermined human dignity and posed a significant challenge to international peace, security and social stability. Democracy and the rule of law were incompatible with all forms of discrimination and intolerance. The proliferation of radical and extremist movements that built their political and social agendas on incitement, hatred and social exclusion was therefore an alarming trend. The Egyptian delegation was particularly concerned by increasingly frequent acts of discrimination, intolerance and violence perpetrated against individuals because of their religious beliefs, as well as more frequent acts of religious hatred and defamation perpetrated under the guise of freedom of expression. Such acts undermined coexistence and respect for diversity. Equally alarming were attempts to justify discrimination against individuals or groups because of their religious beliefs on the pretext of combating terrorism. Xenophobia and discrimination against refugees from the Middle East and beyond were also on the rise. The international community must take concerted action to combat racism and discrimination on the basis of religion. States must, inter alia, adopt more effective legislation to that end and redouble their efforts to prevent the misuse of modern technologies,

including social media platforms, to disseminate incitement and hatred.

50. The United Nations must take more seriously its responsibility to ensure that all peoples fully and unconditionally enjoyed their right to self-determination. In that regard, the Palestinian people had lived under foreign occupation for more than 65 years and the occupying Power continued to subject Palestinians to gross and systemic human rights violations. The plight of the Palestinian people was the inevitable consequence of the Israeli occupation of Palestine; only through the establishment of a viable, independent Palestinian State on the borders of 4 June 1967 and with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the conclusion of a peace accord on the basis of the two-State solution, could a just, durable and sustainable solution to the conflict be achieved.

51. **Mr. Emuze** (Nigeria) said that despite the positive steps taken by some States to prohibit discrimination, millions of people were still subjected to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Nigerian delegation was particularly concerned by instances of racism and xenophobia in politics, education and sport, and increasingly frequent incidences of negative stereotyping that targeted individuals and groups because of their ethnicity or religious beliefs. States must enhance their regional and international cooperation to combat racism in all its forms and promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence. They must also intensify their efforts to end all forms of racial and ethnic profiling, including by implementing fully the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

52. To address the ongoing migrant and refugee crisis, a coordinated response by all stakeholders was needed and States must implement effective measures to prevent attacks against refugees and migrants. Awareness-raising campaigns were also needed to counter racist attitudes. In that regard, Nigeria called for more data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to facilitate efforts to monitor and address acts of racism. Civil society also had an important role to play in monitoring implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Strong political will and adequate funding at all levels would also prove crucial if States were to counter all forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

53. Combating racism was a strategic priority for Nigeria, and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, culture, language, religion or belief were prohibited under the country's Constitution. Nigeria was committed to implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the outcome of Durban Declaration and Plan of Action, which remained the key legal frameworks in that area. Nigeria was also a staunch supporter of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, which promoted and protected the principle of equality and non-discrimination, and other relevant African mechanisms, including the Human Rights Strategy for Africa, which had been adopted with a view to strengthening coordination among member States of the African Union, including in the fight against racial discrimination.

54. **Mr. Al-Obaidi** (Iraq) said that under the Iraqi Constitution, all Iraqi citizens were equal before the law and all discrimination, including on the basis of sex, ethnicity or religion was prohibited. Iraq had acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1970 and was constantly striving to strengthen the principles of non-discrimination and uphold the rights of minorities, inter alia, by returning properties confiscated from them by the former dictatorial regime. Iraq also promoted the languages and religious practices of minorities in the areas in which they constituted a majority and issued licences for television channels broadcasting in minority languages. Iraq was, moreover, striving to uphold the religious rights of minorities and protect their places of worship and religious sites. It also supported civil society organizations promoting the rights and safeguarding the freedoms of minorities, and organized conferences and symposiums to that end and to promote peaceful coexistence.

55. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist groups had committed horrendous atrocities against Iraqi civilians because of their religion or ethnicity. Those atrocities included mass killings, acts of ethnic cleansing and attacks against women and children and others who refused to adhere to a doctrine that had nothing in common with Islam. Iraq would continue to strive to honour its commitments under international human rights instruments with a view to

achieving justice and equality in Iraqi society and safeguarding its ethnic, cultural and religious diversity.

56. **Mr. Canay** (Turkey) said that his country's Constitution provided for equality before the law for all individuals, and prohibited discrimination on the basis, inter alia, of language, race, colour, gender, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion or sect. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was an integral part of Turkey's legislative framework and his country had adopted legislative and administrative reforms, including in the areas of education and law enforcement, to combat discrimination. Turkey believed that concerted national, regional and international efforts were needed to combat all forms and manifestations of discrimination and intolerance; it was therefore a party to all relevant international instruments in that area and would continue to cooperate closely with all relevant international mechanisms. The international community's common struggle against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia was more relevant than ever. Indeed, hostile acts were increasingly being perpetrated against members of religious and ethnic minorities in certain States and the stigmatization of certain individuals because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, including in political discourse, was on the rise. Regrettably, in fact, the Turkish community in certain countries had been directly affected by those trends.

57. Turkey was deeply concerned that the many refugees and irregular migrants who were seeking refuge far from their homes could fall victim to racism, xenophobia, harassment and hate crimes. The international community, and particularly destination States, must redouble their efforts to combat all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including Islamophobia, perpetrated against migrants, and States must work in solidarity to foster a culture of peace. In that regard, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations initiative, which had been spearheaded by Turkey and Spain, was a key mechanism for fostering cross-cultural understanding and mutual respect.

58. **Mr. Jabbar** (Iraq) underscored his country's solidarity with the Palestinian people and other Arabs whose lands remained under Israeli occupation. Iraq condemned the ongoing efforts to deny Palestinians their rights. The Palestinian people must be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination and to establish an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinian people must also be allowed to exercise full sovereignty over their natural resources. Israel, the occupying Power, must moreover, cease its campaign of violence against Palestinians and its ongoing settlement building programmes.

59. The increasing numbers of terrorists travelling to Iraq were undermining that country's territorial integrity and security, and the safety of its citizens. As underlined in the reports submitted to the Committee by the Working Group on mercenaries, those terrorist fighters continue to perpetrate acts of extreme violence, disseminate extremist views and foment ethnic and religious hatred. Iraq must not be allowed to become a safe haven for terrorists. His country therefore called on all States to provide additional support to help prevent the infiltration into Iraqi territory of foreign terrorist fighters. Unless States redoubled their efforts to prevent the recruitment of such terrorists and dismantle the networks providing them with financial support, there was a grave danger that those States would, themselves, find themselves targeted by terrorists.

60. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her country had made significant progress in the previous 15 years in its efforts to combat racial discrimination, particularly against members of vulnerable communities, including persons of African descent, members of indigenous groups, women, children, young people, older persons and persons with disabilities. Venezuela had striven to comply fully with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome of the 2001 World Conference against Racism and had continued to engage with all relevant United Nations bodies working to combat racial discrimination. Venezuela had adopted legislation to combat racial discrimination, and had established mechanisms by which perpetrators were brought to justice and those who had suffered discrimination could seek redress. Venezuela had also established the Council for the Development of Afro-Descendent Communities to promote respect for the culture of persons of African descent and ensure that they fully enjoyed their economic, cultural, social, civil and political rights. In 2014, Venezuela had hosted an international conference on racial discrimination to promote the sharing of best practices on how to combat that scourge, had formulated a national strategy on the prevention and eradication of racial discrimination, and

through its participative democracy, which ensured that the voices of persons of African descent and members of indigenous and immigrant populations were heard, had strengthened its institutional framework on racism. Furthermore, with a view to promoting the equitable treatment of all ethnic groups, the 2011 national census had, for the first time, invited Venezuelans to select the ethnic group to which they felt they belonged.

61. Venezuela denounced the double standards of certain States that claimed that they upheld the principle of equality and respected human rights yet failed to protect victims of injustice and racial discrimination. If all States collaborated to promote sustainable and inclusive development, in which no one was excluded or discriminated against, the global fight against poverty, which lay at the root of human suffering, could be won.

62. **Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan) said that the right of peoples to self-determination had been enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and established as a fundamental and overriding principle of international law. The struggle for the universal realization of that right was far from over, however, and many people continued to live under foreign occupation and alien domination. Pakistan underscored that peoples could not exercise freely their right to self-determination, which did not lapse with the passage of time, if they were subjected to coercive or repressive measures, and that the legitimate struggle of peoples for self-determination could not be obfuscated or denied by deliberate attempts to conflate it with terrorism. In that regard, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute must be resolved in accordance with those fundamental and universal principles and the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Indeed, it was a travesty of justice and morality that the people of Jammu and Kashmir were still deprived of that fundamental right. Human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir remained rampant, and over 100,000 men, women and children had died in the struggle for self-determination. The Jammu and Kashmir dispute must be resolved peacefully, in consultation with, and in accordance with the aspirations of, the Kashmiri people, who constituted an integral stakeholder in the dispute, which the Pakistani Prime Minister had characterized as the most persistent failure of the United Nations. In that regard, the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations should spur the Organization into action: fulfilling the long-held promise of self-determination for the Kashmiri people was an indispensable step that must be taken if a lasting peace and stability were to be established in south Asia.

63. Pakistan remained firmly opposed to all forms of racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance, and was particularly concerned by incidences of religious-based intolerance, discrimination, violence and desecration, which were not only inconsistent with fundamental human rights and freedoms, but also undermined social harmony and global peace and security. To reverse that disturbing new trend, States must enact effective legal and administrative remedies, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/174.

64. **Ms. Al-Temimi** (Qatar) said that her country was committed to fighting racism, discrimination and xenophobia, which were on the rise in many parts of the world and were increasingly being propagated using new communication technologies and media platforms. International cooperation was urgently needed to combat that growing scourge. Qatar was making intensive and continued efforts to protect and promote the rights guaranteed in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to which it was a party, and to uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination. To that end, the Ministry of the Interior had recently convened an international conference that had brought together 400 participants, representing some 50 organizations, to discuss ways to combat incitement to violence, discrimination and racial hatred. Qatar was also involved in the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Initiative, which called for an end to violence and strove to disseminate a culture of tolerance and mutual respect between civilization based on the values of justice, equality and respect for human rights.

65. Out of its genuine desire to foster global peace and promote and respect human rights without discrimination on any grounds, including religion or belief, Qatar had established the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, which strove to spread a culture of dialogue, acceptance and peaceful coexistence between followers of different religions. Qatar had also hosted the annual international Doha Conference for Interfaith Dialogue, which was attended by experts and representatives of different religions from all over the world.

66. Her delegation affirmed the importance of the right of all peoples to self-determination, insofar as respect for that right was a fundamental condition for the protection and promotion of human rights, international peace and mutual understanding. In that regard, the Palestinian people must be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination and to sovereignty over their natural resources, while Israel, the occupying Power, must withdraw fully from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

67. Qatar reiterated its commitment to work to advance a culture of peace, tolerance and respect between individuals and societies, with a view to achieving the common goals of promoting harmony and eliminating violence, extremism, racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. Qatar believed that education could help combat the spread of extremist thought and all forms of racism, by establishing a culture of tolerance. The role of the youth in promoting a culture of peace, increasing awareness of shared values and eliminating extremism and incitement to hatred on the basis of religion or belief was indispensable.

68. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Iran) said that collaboration among States was urgently needed to combat the threat posed by the numerous extremist political parties, movements and groups that had recently emerged worldwide. In that regard, the disaggregated data compiled by the United Nations with a view to combating discrimination, particularly on the basis of gender, should be made available to Member States for them to use in the formulation of their national development plans. It was crucial, however, that that data was made available in line with legal and ethical safeguards, so that it could not be used to identify and perpetrate acts of ethnic or religious violence against particular individuals or communities.

69. Iran was deeply concerned by increasingly frequent cases of Islamophobia, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance in many parts of the world, and the fact that certain political leaders were exploiting those forms of intolerance and hatred to further narrow political agendas. In his future reports on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the Secretary-General should devote greater attention to the increasingly frequent incidences in which Islamophobia was perpetrated under the pretext of freedom of expression, and the negative impact of that trend on the enjoyment by Muslims of their fundamental rights, including the right to freedom of religion.

70. The Iranian delegation was concerned by the extremist views expressed by certain European policy makers who viewed the refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants seeking refuge in Europe merely as a threat to the continent's living standards and social stability. The special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was urged to work with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to monitor the difficult situation and safeguard the rights of newly arrived migrants in Europe.

71. **Mr. Kydyrov** (Kyrgyzstan) said that discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity was prohibited under his country's Constitution. The promotion of interethnic harmony in Kyrgyzstan was a key element of his country's National Sustainable Development Strategy for the period 2013 to 2017. Kyrgyzstan had created a national body to oversee efforts to promote societal integration and was striving to foster a sense of civic identity among all the country's citizens. In that regard, the State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Inter-Ethnic Relations closely monitored relations among the country's ethnic groups and strove to provide timely warnings of any potential unrest. Kyrgyzstan's regional authorities had also established advisory committees comprising leaders of various ethnic communities, civil society activists and religious figures to promote inter-ethnic harmony. Perpetrators of incitement to ethnic hatred, discrimination on the grounds of nationality or genocide faced prosecution under Kyrgyzstan's criminal code.

72. The participation of ethnic minorities in public and political life was a crucial step that could help strengthen the rights of those minorities. Kyrgyzstan had therefore established quotas for ethnic minorities in its legislative bodies and had adopted an integration policy which, while promoting the use of Kyrgyz and Russian, also sought to promote multilingual and multicultural education in schools and safeguard the country's linguistic diversity. All ethnic groups enjoyed the right to study and promote their native languages. In 2013, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had endorsed the political and legislative

steps taken by Kyrgyzstan to combat racial discrimination. Kyrgyzstan was particularly concerned at the spread of contemporary forms of racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the activities of extremist political groups. States must redouble their efforts to ensure that they complied fully with the Convention; Kyrgyzstan would continue to engage with the international community to that end.

73. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Iran) welcomed the relevant reports of the Secretary-General that reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and the adoption of the General Assembly resolutions according non-Member observer State status to Palestine and authorizing the raising of flags at United Nations Headquarters of non-Member observer States, including Palestine. Despite those steps, the basic human rights of Palestinians in their homeland continued to be violated on a daily basis. In particular, the situation in Gaza, the world's largest prison camp, was an affront to humanity, and yet the international community seemed unable to resolve that outrageous situation. Ensuring non-discriminatory access by Palestinians in the whole of Palestine to their land, natural resources and livelihoods, putting an end to land confiscations, settlement construction and expansion, withdrawing all illegal settlers from the territories they had occupied and providing effective remedies to Palestinians for the harm they had suffered were initial steps that must be taken as part of the international community's reaffirmation of the Palestinian people's universally recognized right to self-determination, its inalienable, permanent and unqualified right to an independent State of Palestine, the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people over its natural resources, and its right to live in peace, freedom and dignity.

74. **Ms. Kupradze** (Georgia) said that the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination should serve as a strong incentive to all stakeholders to redouble their efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Georgia remained firmly committed to all relevant human rights instruments providing for equality among all members of society, irrespective of their gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity. With input from civil society and international actors, the Government of Georgia had adopted its first National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights and a related action plan, and had also enacted an anti-discrimination law with a view to eliminating all forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors. Georgia had also adopted a new Civic Equality and Integration Strategy for the period 2015-2020, together with a related action plan, to strengthen respect for the rights of ethnic minorities.

75. The Government of Georgia was extremely concerned by ongoing discrimination against Georgian citizens in the occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. They were prevented from visiting relatives on the other side of the occupation line and had limited access to free social and healthcare services and to education in their native language. In particular, severe restrictions on Georgian language education had been imposed by the Russian occupation forces on ethnic Georgians in the Gali District of Abkhazia. Meanwhile, more than 400,000 internally displaced persons and refugees continued to be deprived of their fundamental right to return to their homes The installation of barbed wire and so-called "border posts" along the occupation line had exacerbated the local population's difficult humanitarian situation by dividing families, restricting movement and blocking access to farmlands, cemeteries and religious sites. Georgia was, moreover, deeply concerned by the absence of international human rights monitoring mechanisms in the occupied regions, and the ongoing refusal of the occupation authorities to allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations special rapporteurs and representatives of other human rights bodies to access those regions. As a member of the Human Rights Council for the 2016-2018 term, Georgia would continue to strive to ensure that basic human rights and freedoms were strengthened, both within the country and beyond.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

76. **Ms. Vilde** (Latvia) said that her country strongly condemned and rejected all totalitarian ideologies, all forms of extremism and radicalism, including neo-Nazism, anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance. With regard to the statement delivered by the representative of the Russian Federation, she emphasized that Latvia was constantly striving to promote and strengthen the identities of all national minorities living on its territory. Latvia was also promoting the acquisition of

Latvian citizenship, and had simplified legislative and naturalization procedures to that end. Some 84 per cent of Latvian residents held Latvian citizenship and more than 99 per cent of children obtained Latvian citizenship at birth. State-funded education was provided in seven national minority languages and more than 100 minority schools had been established in the country. The available data showed clearly that Latvia's social integration policies were working.

77. **Ms. Tasuja** (Estonia) said that her Government had accorded particular attention to promoting integration and facilitating the acquisition of Estonian citizenship. To resolve cases of undetermined citizenship, her Government has simplified the process by which legal residents could acquire Estonian citizenship. Estonia had also amended its citizenship law to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship by young people who had lived in the country for many years but had not obtained a residence permit. As a result, only 3 per cent of the population aged 30 or under were still of undetermined citizenship. Estonia was one of the few countries where all long-term residents, including those with undetermined citizenship, had the right to vote in local elections. All permanent residents enjoyed equal access to social services and residents with undetermined citizenship could travel visa-free to other European Union States and to Russia.

78. **Mr. Lukiyantsev** (Russian Federation) said that the representative of Georgia had erroneously referred to South Ossetia and Abkhazia as occupied territories. They were not, but rather sovereign independent States. The representative of Georgia must acknowledge that reality. The representatives of Estonia and Latvia should not dismiss the serious concerns of the Russian Federation regarding the rights of national minorities in those two countries. Instead their Governments must implement in full the recommendations formulated by international human rights experts and bodies to ensure that those minorities' rights were fully upheld.

79. **Ms. Kupradze** (Georgia) said that the representative of the Russian Federation was attempting to mislead the international community by denying the fact that it was an occupying Power that continued to instigate racism and racial discrimination against ethnic Georgians living in occupied regions of Georgia. The Government of Georgia was constantly striving to shoulder its responsibility to combat racism and racial discrimination and protect and promote the human rights of all the country's citizens. Regrettably, however, the Georgian Government was denied the right to address the humanitarian needs of ethnic Georgians in the occupied regions, especially in the Gali District of Abkhazia, which remained under illegal Russian occupation. In particular, ethnic Georgians residing in those regions were prevented from exercising their fundamental rights to education in their native language, healthcare access and freedom of movement. The international community must redouble its efforts to prevent those abuses, which all States should condemn in the strongest possible terms. Georgia was deeply concerned by the absence of international human rights monitoring mechanisms in the occupied regions. In that connection she reminded the Committee that a former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had referred to those regions as "black holes" due to the absence of international monitoring mechanisms there.

80. **Ms. Mansouri** (Algeria) said that it was surprising to hear the representative of a certain country refer to the right to self-determination when that country was, itself, preventing people from exercising that right. That country should allow its own citizens to enjoy that right before criticizing other States. The key issue that must be addressed remained the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, which, despite numerous United Nations resolutions, remained under illegal military occupation. The occupying Power must comply with international law, withdraw from the territories it had occupied and allow the Saharawi people to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

81. **Mr. Rabi** (Morocco) said that the statement delivered by the Algerian representative was paradoxical and schizophrenic. She was in no position to criticize the human rights situation of other States. Indeed, how could her country claim to be defending the right to self-determination for Moroccan citizens when it denied that very right to the minority populations living within its borders? Algeria must allow all minority groups on its territory to exercise their right to self-determination. The international community must, moreover, pay close attention to any violations of their rights, particularly as Algeria was among the world's worst perpetrators of human rights abuses and continued to carry out arbitrary arrests, torture and other violations and refused to comply with

international human rights instruments. The United Nations human rights bodies and relevant non-governmental organizations, including Human Rights Watch were well-aware of the dire human rights situation in Algeria and the Committee against Torture had voiced serious concerns regarding human rights violations carried out in secret detention centres operated by Algeria's security forces. Freedom of expression was severely curtailed in the country, and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and Amnesty International had both deplored the Algerian authorities' refusal to investigate the disappearance without trace of between 4,000 and 7,000 individuals.

82. **Ms. Mansouri** (Algeria) said that her Government rejected all inflammatory statements by the Moroccan delegation regarding the Saharawi people. Western Sahara had been included in the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories for many years. Morocco must desist from oppressing the Saharawi people in the territories it had occupied and allow them to exercise their legitimate rights, including their right to self-determination.

83. **Mr. Rabi** (Morocco) said that the allegations made by the representative of Algeria against her country were baseless lies. As usual, the Algerian delegation was levelling accusations against another State in order to draw attention away from its own gross human rights violations. Morocco's commitment to upholding and advancing human rights had been widely recognized by the international community. That was certainly not the case for Algeria, which, inter alia, placed severe restrictions on the media and, unlike Morocco, refused to cooperate with United Nations and non-governmental human rights bodies. Indeed, Algeria had refused to authorize visits by United Nation special procedures and rapporteurs for many years. Until it agreed to cooperate with the United Nations human rights mechanisms and procedures, Algeria should refrain from levelling baseless accusations regarding the human rights situation in the Moroccan Sahara. Algeria must, moreover, shoulder its responsibility for the situation there and engage constructively with all relevant stakeholders with a view to reaching a peaceful negotiated settlement to the dispute that was fair, sustainable and mutually acceptable, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.